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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000401

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [UN](#) [LI](#) [EI](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: IRELAND PLANNING A REDUCTION OF THE QRF IN
LIBERIA, BUT WILL DISCUSS A POSSIBLE EXTENSION WITH UN-DPKO

REF: A. STATE 056066
[1](#)B. DUBLIN 313 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Mary E. Daly, Pol/Econ Chief for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. On April 12th, POL/ECON Chief and DATT met with Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) UN/Terrorism and Illicit Drugs Director John Deady and Deputy Director Brian Cahalane and separately with Deputy Political Director Colm O'Floinn and Desk Officer Louise Hartigan regarding the Government of Ireland's (GOI) plans for the potential extension of peacekeeping forces in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Although the GOI is currently looking towards a 25% reduction of forces that could begin as early as May or June, a planned discussion between the GOI and the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) on April 24th will determine the possibility of an extension beyond November. The main discussion points will be the implications of such an extension and the viability of a QRF in Liberia, especially given Swedish determination to leave in November and the lack of other countries willing to take a turn. Additional issues include necessary maintenance for the equipment that has served in the area for nearly three years as well as the camp confinement and extreme conditions that allocated troops face in the demanding environment of Liberia. Despite these issues, Deady said there is top political level interest in the possibility of the extension. In a separate meeting, O'Floinn took the opportunity to raise the issue of the Partnership for Peace and discussed Ireland's EU Battlegroups plan.

LIBERIA

[1](#)2. (C) In response to the presented reftel points, Deady said that at the political level, the GOI is interested in exploring the possibility of extending the QRF's stay and remaining part of the UNMIL. Although Ireland's original commitment to UNMIL will cease late in 2006, the GOI plans to discuss the implications of a possible extension as well as the viability of a QRF in Liberia with the UN on April 24. Deady mentioned the additional issue of maintenance for the equipment that has served in the area for nearly three years must be factored into the equation and also noted the camp confinement and extreme conditions that the allocated troops face in the demanding environment of Liberia. The GOI is currently looking towards a reduction of forces in the middle of the year and could begin as early as May or June. This reduction is foreseen to be approximately 25% of the existing personnel equating to 80 to 90 of the 330 currently allocated troops. Deady confirmed that the Swedes will not extend and intend to completely depart in November to prepare for the EU Nordic Battlegroup.

[1](#)3. (C) Deady also mentioned political factors of concern.

He said the situation in Liberia must be monitored as it progresses, in particular Charles Taylor's influential presence in the region. Deady stated it would be beneficial to the situation if the UN Security Council successfully transfers the trial to The Hague and uses the facilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC). When asked, Deady answered he was unaware of any replacements for the Swedes and said no one seems to be lining up for the task. He expressed his disappointment but added that many of the other countries' military forces are not necessarily qualified for the QRF. He also said the DPKO cannot be completely blamed as they have been experiencing difficulties with the unavailability of a suitable replacement. In reaction to the notion of delaying the reduction until November, Deady responded that the GOI would likely stick to its schedule of beginning to reduce troops in June.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE/EU BATTLEGROUPS

14. (C) In a separate meeting, O'Floinn raised the issue of the Partnership for Peace and discussed Ireland's EU Battlegroups plan. According to O'Floinn, the GOI has met with the Swedes on March 10th and O'Floinn confirmed Ireland's intended involvement in the EU Nordic Battlegroup set to be prepared by January 2008, pending a cabinet decision and necessary changes to Irish law. He added that this potential participation would not deter from the DPKO since the initial contribution to the Nordic Battlegroup would be modest in size. The GOI intends to continue its historic involvement in peacekeeping operations of the EU, UN, and NATO that is commensurate with Ireland's continued growth, size and economics. O'Floinn commented on the fact that the GOI is following the ideas put forth by the U.S.

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Ambassador to NATO pertaining to the Partnership for Peace and noted Ireland has greatly benefited from the defense relationship in the past and would like to continue to do so in the future. O'Floinn expressed concern that any development of the Partnership for Peace should not leave some other countries behind.

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